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A Study of the Use of Student Time at Middlebury College
Undertaken by the Student Educational Policy Committee
May, 1960

The S.E.P.C. undertook this year a project aimed at finding out certain important facts about the student body in general here at Middlebury College.

A questionnaire composed of 15 questions was distributed to the whole student body on Monday, November 30, 1959, and collected Thursday, December 3, 1959.

The questionnaire itself was composed by the S.E.P.C. and sought to obtain information in three major areas that heretofore had been merely a matter of conjecture. The first third contained questions pertaining to studying; the second, reading; the third, activities.

The response from the students in respect to their filling them out was gratifying. We were especially pleased with the percentage of returns from the freshman men's dorms and all the fraternity houses. Below are the actual number of students, by class, that answered the questionnaire:

CLASS	RETURNED	OUT OF A POSSIBLE
Freshman		
Men	145	240
Women	65	146
Sophomore		
Men	82	198
Women	65	144
Junior		
Men	69	157
Women	46	114
Senior		
Men	79	153
Women	51	121
	602	1273

The purpose of the questionnaire was to:

(1) Give much needed accurate information to the faculty in general, in regard to the above three divisions: study, reading, and activities.

(2) Specifically to try to present information to the major departments here at Middlebury in regard to their present courses and a possible revision in light of a proposed curriculum change.

We feel these objectives have been accomplished, and some useful and interesting data have been unearthed as a result of more than 165 hours work on the part of our committee.

In reading our findings it is essential to remember that they are based solely on the questionnaires that were returned to us.

ED000539

SEPC QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

1. Do you generally do all of your required reading?

The majority of students (331:66) stated that they did generally complete all of their required reading. Of those who did not, many included the qualification that it was usually read by pre-A time. It is interesting that the results showed that those carrying heavy reading courses completed their reading as often as those carrying a lighter reading load.

2. If not, for which of your courses do you fail to do all of the reading?

Because the courses mentioned in this answer were drawn from the courses that the individual was currently taking, the answers were so erratic and varied that it was impossible to draw any significant conclusions. Because each individual's schedule of courses was different, the course, if any, which was slighted was related to the schedule. No one course was mentioned more than two or three times.

3. About how much time per week do you generally spend doing study and preparation for your courses?

The faculty organizes its courses on the assumption that the student spends a 30-hour study-week outside of classes. This assumption is substantiated by the questionnaire results.

The majority of students, no matter what their major, spend approximately 30 hours per week on studies. One must keep in mind that the results, tabulated by majors, are not an evaluation of the departments since most students take five courses, and often the majority of these courses are outside the student's major field. Unless otherwise specified, all these results are computed from more than 10 people in each major. Where the number answering in a major is less than 10, the number will be indicated in parentheses following the major. Generally, each major showed a normal distribution with a few extremes of high and low.

A. Languages

French, Russian (7), and German (5): 38 hrs.
Spanish: 30 hrs.
Classics (3): 45 hrs.

(The results seem to include language labs in most cases)

B. Natural Sciences

Physics: 39 hrs.
Geography (4), Biology: 30 hrs.
Chemistry, Geology (6), and Biology-Chemistry: 27 hrs.
Math: 31 hrs.

(It might be kept in mind that some of the science majors may be taking 14 hours, while others are carrying 17 hours. Many included labs, but the answers did not seem to be significantly affected by this.)

C. Humanities

Am. Lit.: 36 hrs.
Eng.: 32 hrs.
Fine Arts: 28 hours
Philosophy: 24 hrs.
Music (1), Drama (2): 22 hrs.

D. Social Sciences

Sociology: 30 hrs.
History: 29 hrs.
Psychology: 28 hrs.
Economics and Political Science: 26 hrs.

4. Do you usually outline or re-read required assignments?

Approximately ninety percent answered yes or usually. In most cases students either outlined or re-read assignment; it was only rarely a combination of the two.

5. Do you usually transcribe lecture notes, or review them at times other than just before tests?

Approximately ninety percent answered "yes" or "usually". In most cases students either transcribed or reviewed lecture notes; it was only rarely a combination of the two.

6. Do you feel you have a sufficient amount of time to successfully complete your assignments?

We must remember that the students' conception of a "sufficient amount of time" seems to vary. A comparison of the students' answer to this question with the amount of time they spend studying leaves many hours unaccounted for.

No numbers are given below except when the variation was wide.

A. Languages - The language majors had an even split of yeses and nos.

B. Natural Sciences - The science majors gave answers splitting evenly between yes and no with the exception of Geology (2 yes, 4 no) and Math (18 yes, 6 no).

C. Humanities -

American Literature: 8 yes, 14 no.
Dra[illegible], English, Fine Arts, Music: evenly split.

D. Social Sciences

History: 34 yes, 21 no.
Poli. Sci.: 25 yes, 8 no.
Psychology: evenly split.

9. What specific college courses have inspired you to read?

One must keep in mind that "reading courses" (e.g., literature) will necessarily inspire more people to read than "non-reading courses" (e.g., science courses). It must also be kept in mind that required courses and courses with high enrollment will be mentioned more often than courses with a small enrollment, at least numerically, although not necessarily percentage-wise.

The totals presented below represent the number of times the course was mentioned, regardless of majors. The only courses listed are those which were mentioned over five times.

A. Languages

Russian 25: 11 times

B. Humanities

Am. Lit. 21: 47
English 11: 27
English 33: 17
Unspecified English courses: 19
Fine Arts 25: 21

C. Social Sciences

C.C.: 34
Unspecified Economics courses: 14
History 22: 24
History 12: 15
Unspecified Sociology courses: 10

On the following page is a table of all majors and their total enrollment.

MAJORS

SECOND SEMESTER 1959-60

	MEN				WOMEN					
	1960	1961	1962	Total	1960	1961	1962	Total	Total	Total Answering Questionnaire
American Literature	8	5	4	17	18	18	8	44	61	20
Biology	8	3	9	20	5	10	10	25	45	19
Biology-Chemistry	3	7	7	17	0	0	0	0	17	10
Chemistry	7	9	15	31	5	3	3	11	42	14
Classics-Latin	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	1	3	3
Economics	24	23	27	74	3	3	0	6	80	43
Drama	2	0	0	2	1	0	3	4	6	2
English	11	11	16	38	13	20	21	54	92	33
Fine Arts	2	3	2	7	1	4	2	7	14	4
French	0	3	3	6	17	17	25	59	65	27
Geography	4	3	3	10	1	1	0	2	12	4
Geology	3	7	3	13	0	0	1	1	14	6
German	1	2	3	6	2	1	3	6	12	5
History	27	18	25	70	10	12	20	42	112	57
Home Economics	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	-
Mathematics	7	7	5	19	4	6	7	17	36	24
Music	1	0	0	1	3	1	1	5	6	1
Philosophy	2	9	3	14	0	1	1	2	16	8
Physics	3	6	9	18	2	0	0	2	20	15
Political Science	17	18	22	57	11	7	4	22	79	35
Psychology	3	4	8	15	12	1	6	19	34	13
Russian	2	1	2	5	2	1	5	8	13	7
Sociology	16	14	16	46	10	6	8	24	70	18
Spanish	2	1	2	5	0	2	11	13	18	8
No Major	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	3	-
	153	154	188	495	121	114	142	377	872	383
Less Joint Majors	0	-1	-2	-3	-2	-1	-2	-5	-8	
	153	153	186	492	119	113	140	372	864	

10. List organized campus activities you belong to, and average time spent on each per week.

The results show that women tend to spend more time in activities as they progress through their college careers. The men are quite consistent in the amount of time spent on activities throughout their first three years. Their participation tends to drop off, however, in the senior year. This is very probably a result of increased concern over comprehensives, and in many cases, concern about graduating.

The women indicated that the majority of their time in activities was spent with sorority, with Forum occupying second place. In general, the women who answered spend an average of 3.5 hours per week on extra-curricular activities.

Below are given the percentages of women, by classes, in the two activities which had the highest participation.

Freshman Women....30% in Forum (they had not pledged sororities at the time of this questionaire.)

Sophomore Women...85% in sorority and Forum.

Junior Women.....70% in sorority and Forum.

Senior Women.....75% in sorority and Forum.

About 30% of the men in each class indicated that they spend an average of 12 hours a week participating in sports. This figure includes both varsity and intramural sports. Many students also included recreational skiing during the winter months. It must be kept in mind that most varsity sports involve far more than the twelve hour average, but that they are seasonal and occupy a student for a limited part of the year.

It was found that the men of the sophomore and senior classes spend the most time on fraternity activities. We feel that this is because the sophomores and seniors are the two classes that usually live in the house. The sophomores, as new members are usually the most enthusiastic about house projects, and are also those who probably waste the most time while at the house. The seniors hold most of the time-consuming elective offices, and are also encouraged by many fraternities to live at the house, to set an example.

In conclusion, it seems to us that, while most students take part in at least one organized campus activity, the amount of time devoted to these pursuits does not seem in itself to be excessive.

11. Do you put aside academic work due to responsibilities for activities?

The results showed that many students, at some time or other, do put aside their studies for extra-curricular interests. The following are the figures, by classes, of the percentage that sometimes put aside academic work for activities.

Freshman men.....19%
women.....21%

Sophomore men.....32%
women....50%

Junior men.....51%
women.....68%

Senior men.....42%
women.....53%

It is interesting to note that the women, in spite of their higher general academic standing, tend to put aside work more often than the men.

It should be kept in mind that, while work may be put aside, it does not necessarily indicate that it doesn't eventually get done. There are certain times of the year when the vast majority temporarily push aside their studies, such as rushing and Carnival.

12. Have you ever had to quit or become inactive in an organization due to lack of time?

The results of this question showed two definite trends which held true for both men and women, freshman through senior year.

a. 37% of the total student body has had either to quit or become inactive in an organization due to lack of time.
b. The students have withdrawn from activities in a slightly increasing amount as their college career progressed. This ranges from 30% answering yes in the freshman year to 41% in the senior year.

In conclusion it can be seen that the student increasingly tends to drop out of organizations as he progresses through his four years at Middlebury. Usually the student tends to maintain active membership in those activities he considers most worthwhile.

13. What activities do you find most worthwhile?

The great majority indicated that the particular activities which they were in most worthwhile. Hence, the most often named seemed to be those which we found in question 10 were the most participated in--sorority, fraternity, sports, and Forum.

14. What activities do you feel should be eliminated?

The majority of students who answered either felt that none should be, or they weren't qualified to single any out. However, there was considerable opposition to student government. It is quite significant that 25% of all upperclass women felt that sororities were not worthwhile. On the other hand, the men voiced no such feeling about fraternities.

15. If you have a paying job, how many hours per week do you work?

The number of students employed increases steadily with each succeeding year. The average time spent on jobs by those who have them remains constant at about 10 hours per week after the freshman year.

Beyond the freshman year about one-third of the student body is engaged in some sort of paying job. The highest figure reported to us was that of the senior women, 58% of whom have paying jobs.

As was the case with activities, it seems to us that the amount of time spend on jobs is not enough, in itself, to interfere with academic responsibilities

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